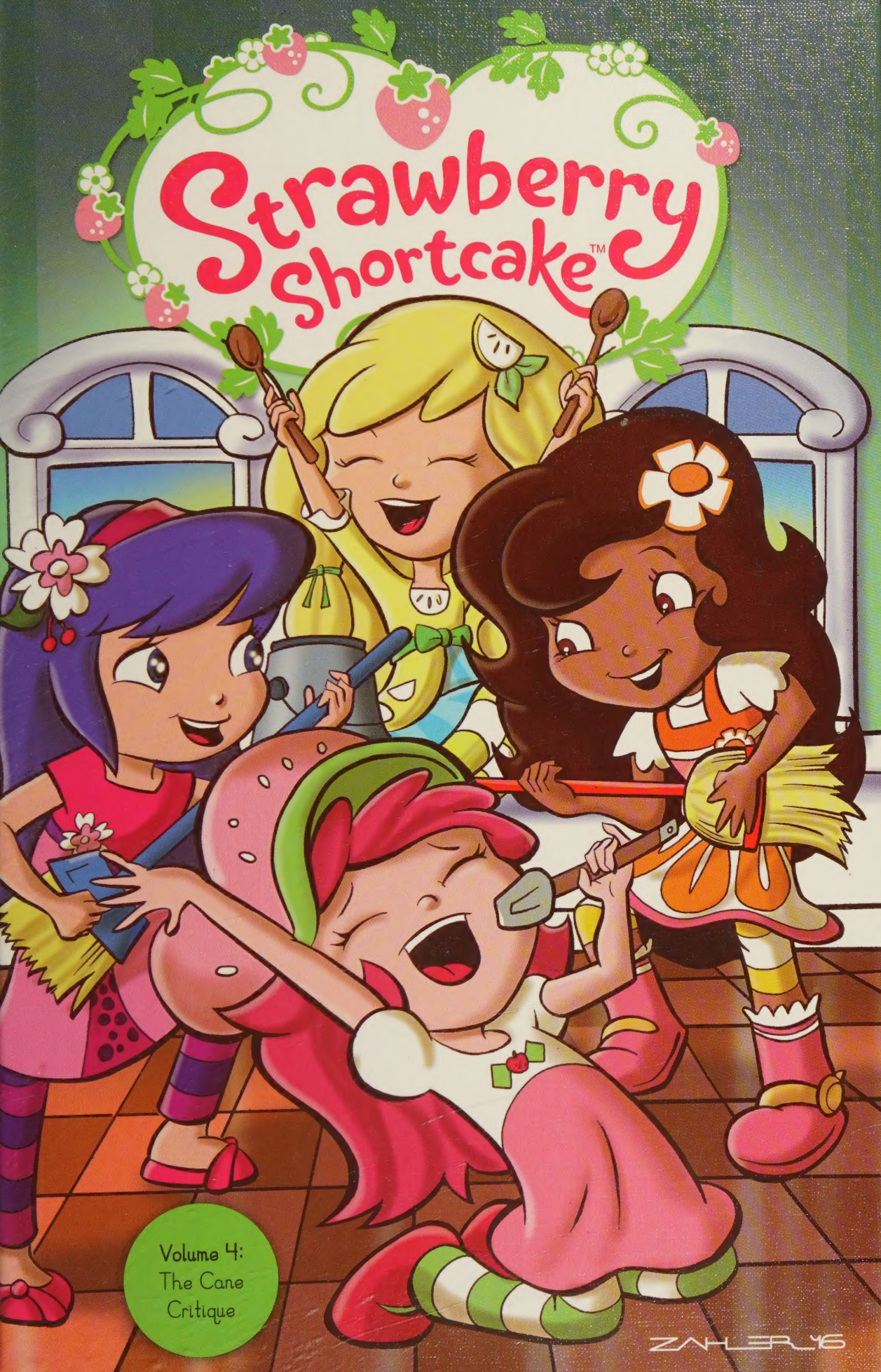
Strawberry Shortcake™
Volume 4:
The Cane
Critique
ZAHLER 16

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Strawberry Shortcake™

Volume 4:
The Cane Critique

Written by: Georgia Ball
Art by: Amy Mebberson
Colors by: Fernando Peniche
Letters by: Robbie Robbins

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Title: The Cane critique / writers: Georgia Ball ; Kristen Gudsnuk ; art: Amy Mebberson ; Nicoletta Baldari.
Description: Reinforced library bound edition. | Minneapolis, Minnesota : Spotlight, 2018. | Series: Strawberry shortcake
Summary: When foodie blogger Raisin Cane convinces Berrykin Bloom to hire Purple Piemanne to cater his event over Strawberry, the baker challenges him to a tasting competition. | Bonus story summary (A Talent for Making you Cry) Cherry Jam performs a song about Blueberry Muffin and learns the importance of being honest with your friends.
Identifiers: LCCN 2016961952 | ISBN 9781532140327 (vol. 4, lib. bdg.)
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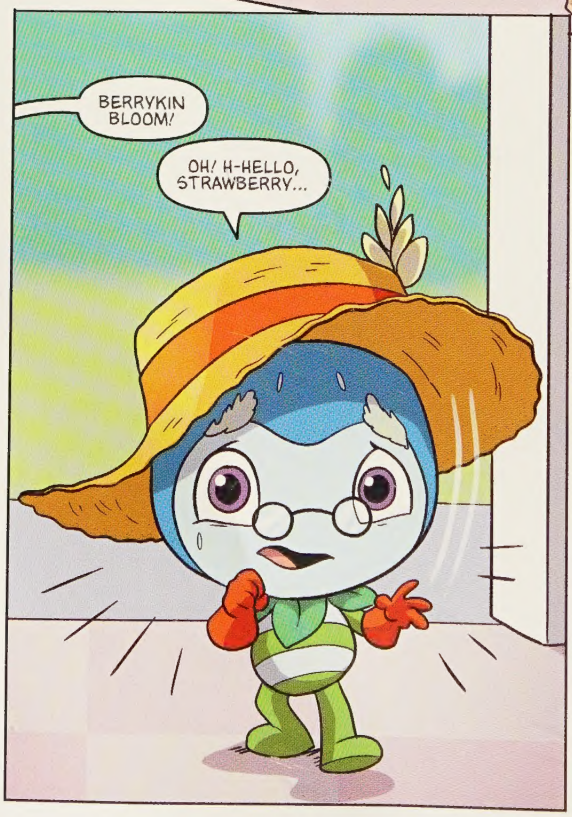
WHAT ARE ALL OF YOU GIGGLING ABOUT?
RAISIN CANE'S REVIEW OF THE CHOWHOUSE IN CAROB COUNTY.
SHE'S MY COUSIN, SO OF COURSE IT'S DRIPPING WITH SASS.
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU AND SWEET HAD A COUSIN.
WE DON'T REALLY HANG OUT.
I KNOW I SHOULDN'T LAUGH—BUT IT'S JUST SO FUNNY!
THIS IS PRETTY ROUGH...
DO YOU REALLY THINK THEIR GRAVY IS SO GRITTY IT'S LIKE EATING SAND?

OBVIOUSLY THERE'S NO WAY TO KNOW THAT WITHOUT ACTUALLY EATING SAND.
I DON'T KNOW...
I'D FEEL REALLY BAD IF SOMEONE WROTE A REVIEW LIKE THIS ABOUT THE BERRY BITTY CAFÉ.
STRAWBERRY, CRITICISM IS A NORMAL PART OF THE RESTAURANT BUSINESS.

IT'S ALSO HILARIOUS.
HEY SWEET, DID YOU SEE THAT PART WHERE SHE SAID THE ONION RINGS WERE IN A POOL OF GREASE SO DEEP YOU COULD SWIM IN IT?
I DID! BUT I CAN'T WAIT TO READ IT AGAIN.

WELL, CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM IS NORMAL, RASPBERRY...
I DON'T KNOW IF SAYING "GRUBBY'S PERSONAL STYLE MATCHES HIS NAME" IS CONSTRUCTIVE...

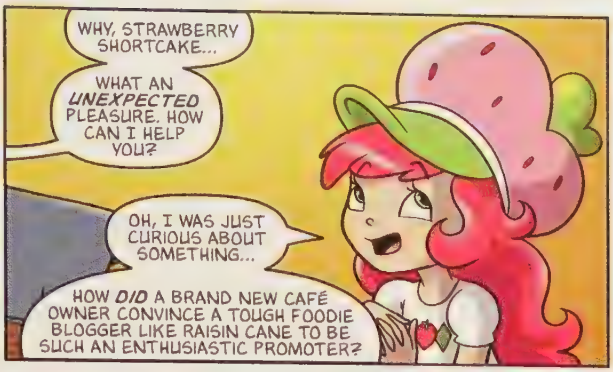

BERRYKIN BLOOM!
OH! H-HELLO, STRAWBERRY...

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO GO OVER THE CATERING MENU FOR YOUR BIANNUAL FAMILY REUNION—THIS IS THE YEAR, RIGHT? IT'S ON MY CALENDAR!
OH, YES... ABOUT THAT...

IT'S JUST... YOU SEE...
I HAVEN'T MADE UP MY MIND WHO SHOULD CATER MY EVENT THIS YEAR.
OH!
I'M SO SORRY! I SHOULDN'T HAVE ASSUMED...
NO, I'M SORRY! I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TELL YOU...
IT'S JUST THAT I'VE DONE IT SO MANY TIMES, UM...
I KNOW! AND YOU'VE DONE A SPECTACULAR JOB—
OH! I WAITED UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE AND MADE THINGS AWKWARD.
THIS IS ALL MY FAULT...
ACTUALLY...
IT'S MOSTLY MY FAULT.
RAISIN CANE?
IT'S AN HONOR TO MEET ME, I KNOW. MY FANS SAY IT ALL THE TIME.
I JUST DID THE BERRYKIN HERE A SERVICE BY TELLING HIM ABOUT THE EXTRAS HE CAN GET IF HE GOES ELSEWHERE—
LIKE PIEMAN'S ON PORCUPINE PEAK, FOR INSTANCE.
HE DID OFFER ME SOME SIGNIFICANT PERKS—
—EVEN A MACARON TOWER CENTERPIECE!

THAT IS A GOOD DEAL.
IT TOTALLY IS. BUT DON'T WORRY—
—SOMEDAY WHEN YOU'RE A BIGGER OPERATION, YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO COMPETE.
I REALLY HAVEN'T MADE UP MY MIND YET, STRAWBERRY. I DON'T KNOW PIEMAN'S VERY WELL...
THIS IS SUCH A BIG DECISION...
WHAT IF WE HAD A TASTE TEST? A SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON?
MAYBE THAT WOULD HELP ME MAKE UP MY MIND...
"AND EASE MY CONSCIENCE..."
feel the grind
PIEMAN'S
on Porcupine Peak

SO THEN I ASKED THE GUY, "WHY CLEAN YOUR SOCKS ANYWAY? ISN'T THAT JUST GIVING IN TO THE SYSTEM?"
DING DING
SERVICE PLEASE?


WHY, STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE...
WHAT AN *UNEXPECTED* PLEASURE. HOW CAN I HELP YOU?
OH, I WAS JUST CURIOUS ABOUT SOMETHING...
HOW *DID* A BRAND NEW CAFÉ OWNER CONVINCE A TOUGH FOODIE BLOGGER LIKE RAISIN CANE TO BE SUCH AN ENTHUSIASTIC PROMOTER?

I CAN'T IMAGINE. MUST HAVE BEEN MY UNIQUE SET OF SKILLS.
THAT *IS* REALLY IMPRESSIVE.

ALL RIGHT THEN... IF YOU'RE SO GOOD AT WINNING OVER THE CRITICS—
—YOU SHOULD BE COMPLETELY OK WITH HAVING A TASTING CHALLENGE TO DECIDE WHO CATERS THE BLOOM REUNION.
MOST VOTES FROM THE AUDIENCE WINS.

IS THERE TEA IN HERE SOMEWHERE?

I ACCEPT YOUR CHALLENGE—
AND MY FOOD IS GOING TO KNOCK YOUR SOCKS OFF.
WELL, IF IT DOES...
AT LEAST *MY* SOCKS WILL BE CLEAN.

♫
READY FOR BERRIES?
STRAWBERRY
TAP TAP
DO YOU HAVE PERMISSION TO POST THAT, YOUNG MAN?
NO, I GUESS I DON'T...
I JUST SAW ALL THESE OTHER POSTERS AND I THOUGHT—
PIE EVERYTHING!
BERRY BITTY CITY BYLAW NUMBER 41, SECTION B...
ALL PUBLIC POSTINGS MUST HAVE THE BERRY BITTY OFFICIAL STAMP OF APPROVAL!
OK, OK!
HOW DO I GET A PERMIT?
I'LL SEND YOU ONE IN THE MAIL. PLEASE SIGN AND REVIEW ALL THIRTY PAGES, AND WHEN YOU MAIL IT BACK, MAKE SURE IT'S NOTARIZED.
DON'T EXPECT A RESPONSE FOR AT LEAST THREE WEEKS. HAVE A NICE DAY!

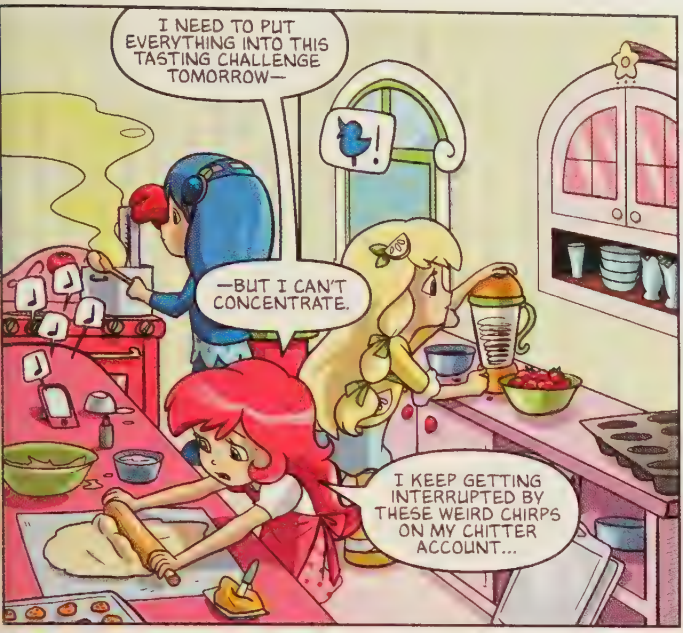
WHAT'S WRONG, HUCKLEBERRY PIE?
BERRY BITTY BUREAUCRACY.
LOOKS LIKE THESE POSTERS ARE NOT GOING TO BE PART OF THIS CAMPAIGN.
WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT, HAVE YOU SEEN WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOUR SHOUT SCORE?
THAT RESTAURANT REVIEW WEBSITE?
NO. WHY?
WHERE DID ALL OF THESE NEGATIVE REVIEWS COME FROM?
I DON'T RECOGNIZE ANY OF THESE REVIEWERS...
I THINK IT MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH RAISIN CANE'S LATEST BLOG POST. SHE SAID SHE HAD A "BAD EXPERIENCE."
SHE KIND OF ENCOURAGED HER FANS TO GIVE YOU THEIR "FEEDBACK" ON HER BEHALF.
"—THE OWNER, STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE, DELIBERATELY IGNORED ME SO SHE COULD CHAT WITH HER FRIENDS AND, AFTER I GOT HER ATTENTION, FORGOT TO TAKE MY ORDER."
THAT'S NOT WHAT HAPPENED!
STRAWBERRY! WAIT 'TIL YOU HEAR!

I THOUGHT HER PRAISE FOR PIEMAN'S WAS A LITTLE SUSPICIOUS, SO LEMON AND I DID SOME RESEARCH—
RAISIN CANE IS THE FOUNDER OF THE PURPLE PIEMAN FAN CLUB!
HE HAS A CLUB?

WE FOUND THE INFO IN ONE OF HER SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES.
AND SOCIAL MEDIA NEVER LIES!
.....

"WE DID SOME ADDITIONAL UNDERCOVER WORK JUST TO BE SURE.
"ANYTHING SHE WANTS, HE MAKES IT RIGHT AWAY.
"THERE'S NO QUESTION ABOUT IT—THEY ARE IN CAHOOTS."
Specials

"CAHOOTS?" YOU READ TOO MANY MYSTERY NOVELS, BLUEBERRY.
IF THAT'S EVEN POSSIBLE— YES.
BUT THIS IS SOMETHING THE WORLD DESERVES TO KNOW.
!



"EVERYONE KNOWS WHAT YOU'RE UP TO—YOU'RE GOING TO LOSE THE TASTING CHALLENGE TOMORROW, AND YOU'LL DO *ANYTHING* TO CHANGE THE NARRATIVE—

"EVEN TRY TO 'PROVE' I HAVE A CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

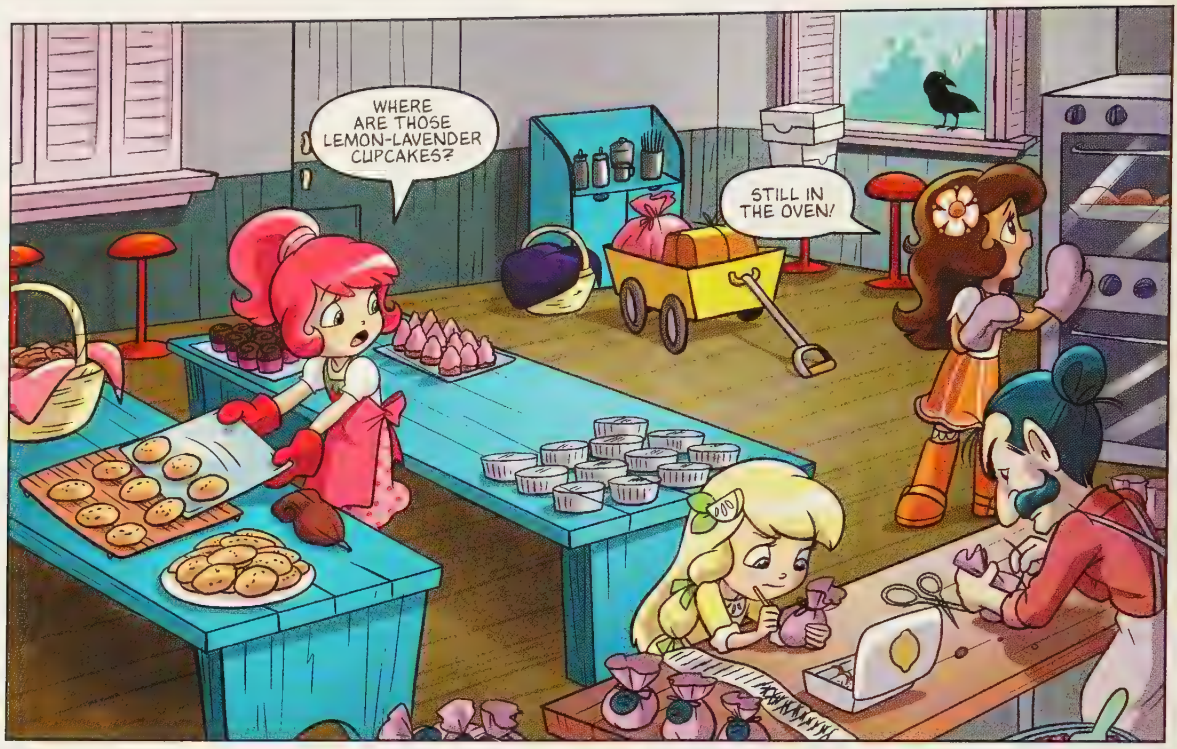
"SINCE I NEVER MADE MY ASSOCIATION WITH PPFC A SECRET, ALL THIS *REALLY* REVEALS IS HOW LOW YOU'RE WILLING TO GO!"

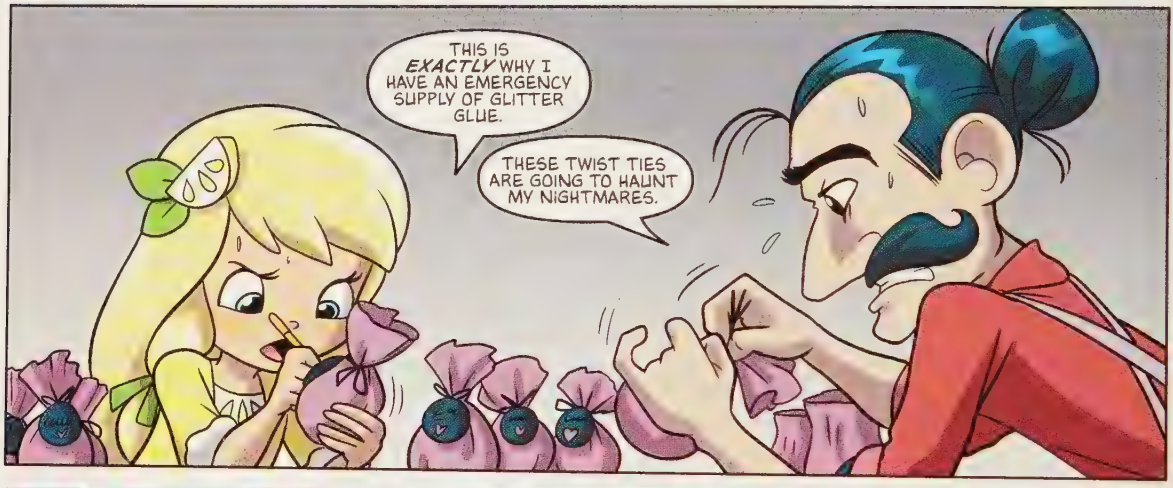
IF SHE WAS UPFRONT ABOUT IT, AT LEAST ONE OF HER ARTICLES MIGHT HAVE MENTIONED THE CONNECTION.
OH, I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS!
"I'VE GOT TO BE READY FOR TOMORROW."
EVERYTHING IS DELICIOUS, STRAWBERRY... JUST LIKE ALWAYS.
I KNOW I CAN'T OFFER AS MANY EXTRA TREATS AS PIEMAN'S, BUT I APPRECIATE YOUR GIVING ME A CHANCE ANYWAY.
AND THANK YOU FOR BEING SO UNDERSTANDING! BUT IT'S NOT MY DECISION ANYMORE...
"NOW IT'S UP TO THE VOTERS."
PLUNK

WHEN THE VOTES WERE COUNTED...
I'M TERRIBLY SORRY, STRAWBERRY. IF IT'S ANY CONSOLATION, PIEMAN'S WON BY A VERY SLIM MARGIN.
WE CAN DO A RECOUNT IF YOU LIKE?
NO, THAT'S ALL RIGHT.
I AGREED TO A FAIR VOTE...
NOW I HAVE TO GIVE CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE.
CONGRATU—
MR. BLOOM! THANK YOU SO MUCH! I CAN'T WAIT TO GET STARTED.
THE VOTERS MADE THE RIGHT DECISION.
NOW, DOWN TO BUSINESS. HOW MANY ARE ON THE GUEST LIST?
LET'S SEE... THERE'S BERRYKIN EARL AND BERRYKIN CARL. AND OF COURSE MY AUNT... HER COUSINS... *THEIR* COUSINS...
H-HOW MANY—?
THEN THERE'S THE BRANCH ON LAVA CAKE LAKE AND THE BRANCH IN SALT LICK CITY, TWICE REMOVED... OR WAS THAT THREE TIMES?
MAYBE YOU'D BETTER SEE THE LIST...
AND WE'RE ALL *REALLY* LOOKING FORWARD TO THE PERSONALIZED GOODIE BAGS!

CLOSED for PRIVATE EVENT.
SINCE WHEN DO I OFFER PERSONALIZED GOODIE BAGS?
THROWING THEM IN SWEETENED THE DEAL. I THOUGHT YOU WANTED TO GET THIS GIG?
I WANTED TO CATER AN EVENT, NOT MAKE GOODIE BAGS FOR "BERRYKINS TIMES INFINITY"—
—OR A MACARON TOWER CENTERPIECE. WATCH IT!
THIS IS WHY YOU NEED ME, PURPS. YOU HAVE TO SAY WHATEVER TO SEAL THE DEAL.
YOU JUST DON'T KNOW AS MUCH ABOUT SELF-PROMOTION AS YOU THINK YOU DO.

MAYBE NOT...
BUT I DO KNOW A FEW THINGS ABOUT SELF-PRESERVATION...
WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE DESSERT MENU? WE HAVE A REALLY NICE SLICE OF—
—PIE?!
STRAWBERRY! ONCE AGAIN, I HUMBLY BEG YOU FOR YOUR HELP...
WITHOUT YOU, THE REUNION TOMORROW WILL BE A COMPLETE DISASTER!
BUT WHAT ABOUT EVERYTHING YOU PROMISED BERRYKIN BLOOM? I THOUGHT—
AH, WELL... IT SEEMS RAISIN MAY HAVE... OVERPROMISED.
EVER SO SLIGHTLY.
AND I JUST CAN'T BEAR TO SHOW UP TOMORROW WITHOUT ENOUGH FOOD AND SEE ALL OF THOSE DISAPPOINTED FACES...
WE DON'T WANT TO LET THE DEAR LITTLE FARMER DOWN, DO WE?


WHERE ARE THOSE LEMON-LAVENDER CUPCAKES?
STILL IN THE OVEN!


THIS IS *EXACTLY* WHY I HAVE AN EMERGENCY SUPPLY OF GLITTER GLUE.
THESE TWIST TIES ARE GOING TO HAUNT MY NIGHTMARES.

KEEP GOING, TEAM... YOU'RE DOING GREAT!

"I THINK WE'LL HAVE ENOUGH FOR EVERYONE TOMORROW."
Berryki Bloom FARMS
COME AND GET IT!
WHOA!
EEP!
MMMM...

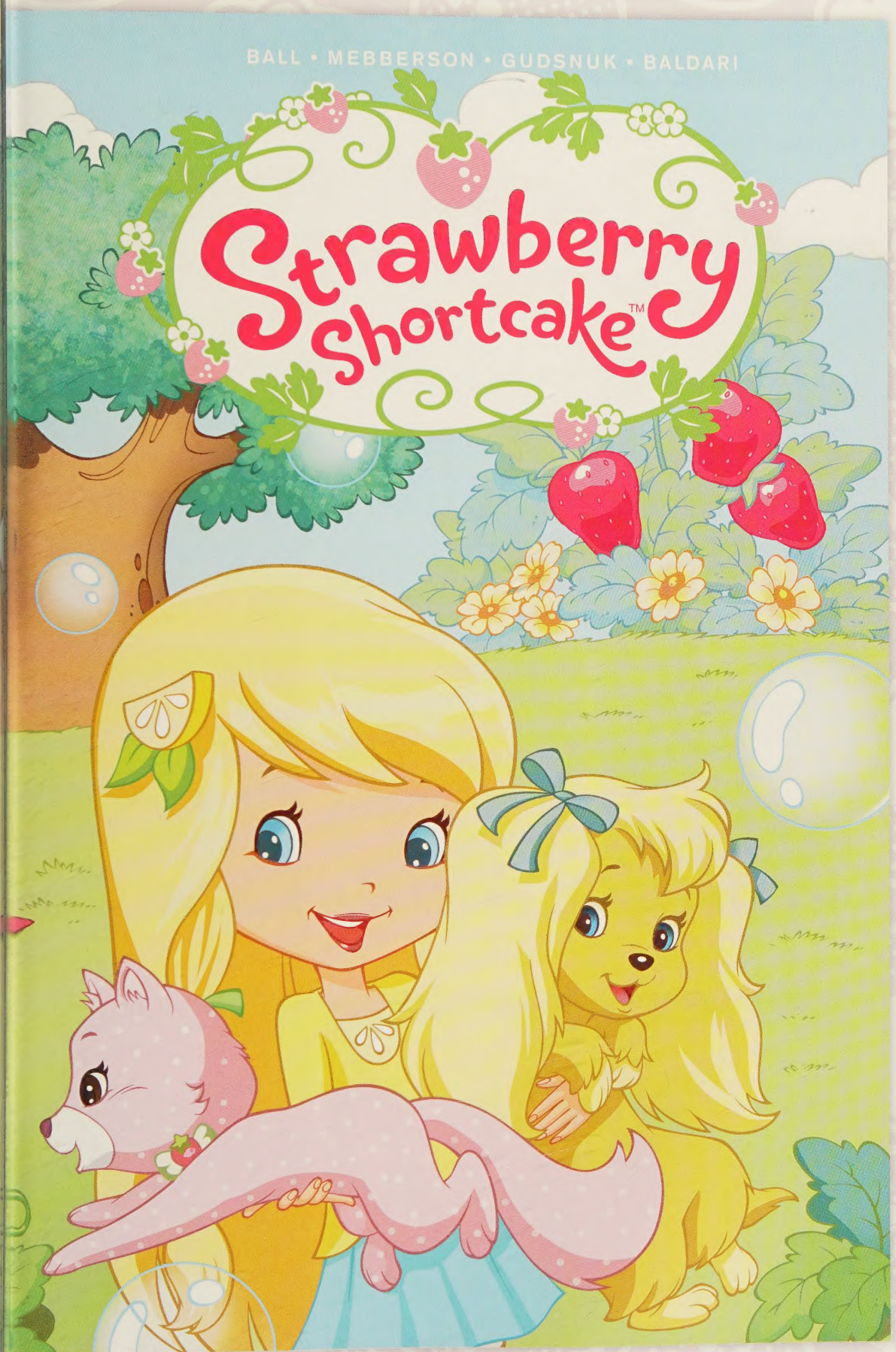
SECOND BATCH!
YOU REALLY CAME TO THE RESCUE, STRAWBERRY.
AFTER EVERYTHING I WROTE ABOUT YOU, I'M NOT SURE WHY—
—BUT I'M GLAD YOU DID ANYWAY.
WELL, I COULDN'T DISAPPOINT BERRYKIN BLOOM AND—WAIT!
WAS THAT AN APOLOGY?
AS CLOSE TO ONE AS I EVER GET.
I'M SO GLAD EVERYTHING WORKED OUT. I FEEL GOOD ENOUGH TO TAKE ON AN EVENT TWICE THIS SIZE!
YEAH, TAKE IT DOWN A NOTCH, PURPS.
SENSATIONAL FAMILY REUNION! EVERYONE IS THRILLED.
WELL—ER, PERHAPS...
BUT THEN AGAIN...
YOU TWO SHOULD WORK TOGETHER MORE OFTEN!
COMPETITION IS HEALTHY TOO!

BERRY City Festival
A Talent for Making You Cry
Written by: Kristen Gudsnuk
Art by: Nicoletta Baldari
Color by: Nicoletta Baldari
Letters by: Christie Miesner
YOU COULDN'T EVEN CALL TO SAY...
YOU WERE TOO BUSY THAT DAY...
TOO BUSY TO SEE YOUR FRIEND.
YOU NEEDED TO READ THE NEW BOOK'S END.
IS... IS THIS SONG... ABOUT ME?
I DON'T NEED TO BE A DETECTIVE TO KNOW YOU'D RATHER READ "PATTY PERSIMMON" THAN SHOW UP TO HELP ME WITH MY TALENT SHOW SONG...
...WHICH JUST SEEMS WRONG.
UM. I THINK THIS SONG IS ABOUT ME.
AW, YOU'RE LOOKING INTO IT TOO MUCH!
SO IF MY SONG DID COME OUT LAME, YOU ARE PARTIALLY TO BLAME.

...IT WAS SUCH A HEARTFELT SONG! I JUST LOVED IT!
IT'S SO CATCHY! "I DON'T NEED TO BE A DETECTIVE TO KNOW..."
THANKS.
I'M SORRY I FORGOT TO HANG OUT WITH YOU, CHERRY! BUT YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO WRITE A MEAN SONG ABOUT ME.
I TOLD BLUEBERRY THE SONG WASN'T *ABOUT HER!* IT'S JUST A SONG, BLUEBERRY!
OH, NO, BLUEBERRY! THAT WASN'T ABOUT YOU. I'M NOT MAD AT YOU FOR FORGETTING ABOUT OUR PLANS. IT'S FINE. NO ONE'S PERFECT.
R-REALLY? YOU'RE NOT MAD?
I'D COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN ABOUT IT.

BERRY CITY TALENT SHOW, DAY 2
BERRY City
I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH. INSTEAD I JUST TRIED TO SOOTHE YOUR FEELINGS.
YESTERDAY, OH, I WON'T LIE, I SANG A SONG 'BOUT BLUEBERRY PIE...
OKAY, YOU CAN'T SAY THIS SONG ISN'T ABOUT ME.
IT'S ART! ART ISN'T CUT AND DRY LIKE THAT!
THIS IS THE ONLY WAY I KNOW HOW TO SAY MY FEELINGS WERE WOUNDED, SO WAS MY PRIDE, WHICH IS STILL NO EXCUSE FOR ME HAVING LIED.
I FEEL BAD IF I'VE MADE YOU UPSET. I HOPE YOU'LL FORGIVE AND FORGET.
CHERRY! I'VE GOT SOMETHING FOR YOU.

W-WOW! BLUEBERRY! THESE LYRICS ARE GREAT!
BERRY CITY TALENT SHOW, DAY 3
Berry City Festival
FRIENDS CAN SOMETIMES MAKE MISTAKES. FRIENDS CAN MAKE YOU FEEL HEARTACHE, BUT FRIENDS CAN ALSO HELP YOU THROUGH EVERYTHING YOU HAVE TO DO...
I'M SO GLAD WE'VE MADE UP!
ME TOO, CHERRY. YOU KNOW, YOU CAN ALWAYS TELL ME IF I HURT YOUR FEELINGS. I'D RATHER KNOW.
I... I'LL TRY. I JUST FEEL LIKE I MIGHT HURT YOUR FEELINGS IF I TELL YOU MY FEELINGS ARE HURT. IT'S... IT'S COMPLICATED SOMETIMES.
I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. HONESTY CAN BE AWKWARD.
GOOD NIGHT!
NIGHT!
"I DON'T NEED TO BE A DETECTIVE TO KNOW..."
...OKAY, THAT SONG IS *REALLY* CATCHY.



STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE ISSUE #4, SUB COVER

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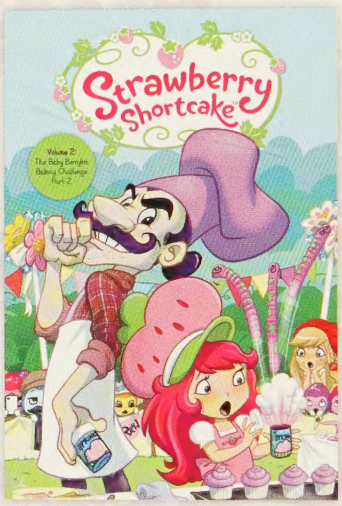

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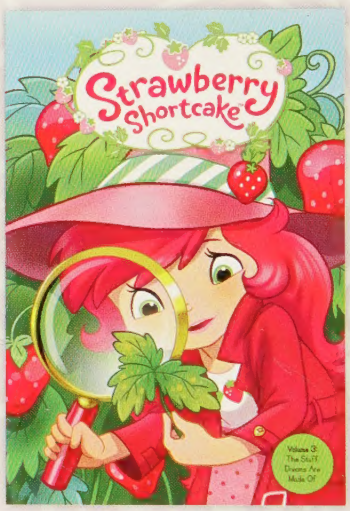

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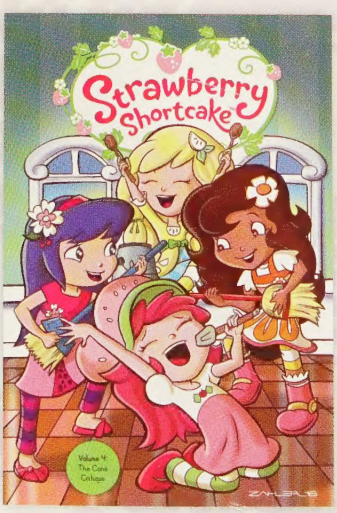

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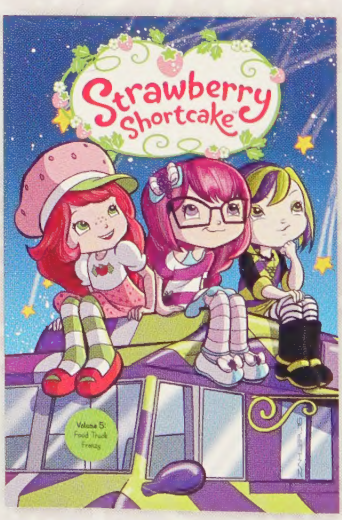

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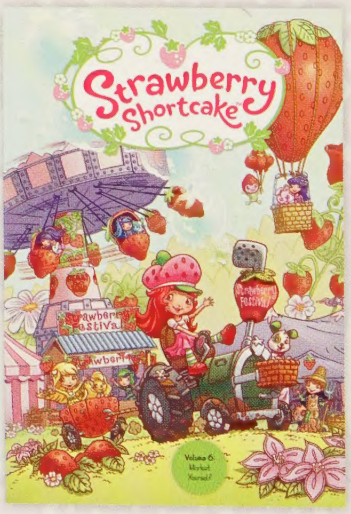

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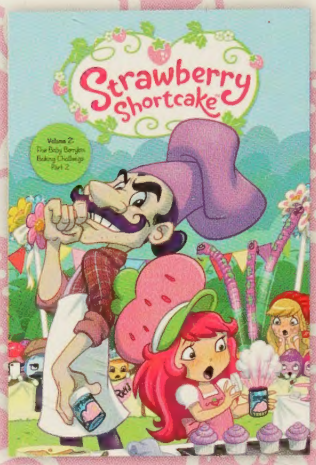

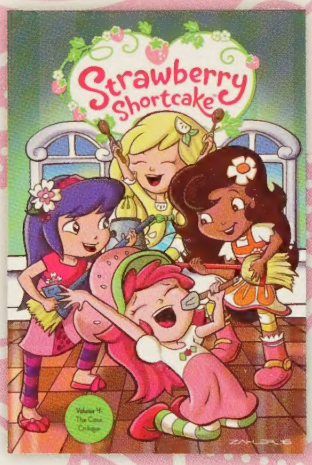

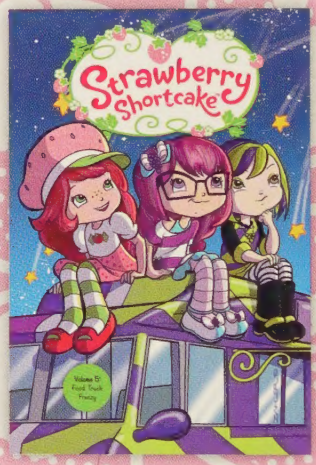

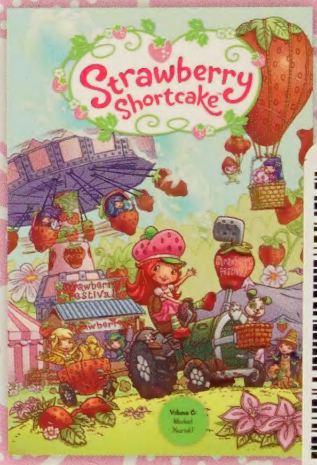

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Strawberry Shortcake returns to comics with all of her friends, Orange Blossom, Lemon Meringue, Raspberry Torte, Blueberry Muffin, and all your other favorite characters. Join Strawberry as she takes on a baking challenge with the infamous Purple Pieman, a smooth-talking businessman who wants her to expand her bakery, a tough foodie critic, and more!

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